

FGP and SCP Service Hour Requirements

Final Rule Fact Sheet



Overview

In December 2018, the Final Rule, with updates to Senior Corps program regulations (45 CFR 2551, 45 CFR 2552, 45 CFR 4553), was published in the [Federal Register](#). Updates to program rules will be effective for all Senior Corps programs on January 31, 2019. Updated regulations include a change in the service hour requirements for Senior Companion Program (SCP) and Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) volunteers. This document provides more information about this change. For information on all the changes implemented by the Final Rule, see the [Final Rule itself](#) or Senior Corps' [Final Rule Headquarters](#).

The Final Rule's Changes to the FGP and SCP Volunteer Service Hour Requirements

The updated regulations change the required hours of service for SCP and FGP volunteers from "a minimum of 15 hours per week and a maximum of 40 hours per week" to "a minimum of 260 hours annually, or a minimum of 5 hours per week" (45 CFR 2551.51 and 45 CFR 2552.51).

Regulation	Previous Text	Updated Text
45 CFR 2551.51 (SCP Program Regulations)	A Senior Companion shall serve a minimum of 15 hours per week and a maximum of 40 hours per week. A Senior Companion shall not serve more than 2088 hours per year. Within these limitations, a sponsor may set service policies consistent with local needs.	A Senior Companion shall serve a minimum of 260 hours annually, or a minimum of 5 hours per week. A Senior Companion may serve a maximum of 2080 hours annually, or a maximum of 40 hours per week. Within these limitations, a sponsor may set service policies consistent with local needs.
45 CFR 2552.52 (FGP Program Regulations)	A Foster Grandparent shall serve a minimum of 15 hours per week and a maximum of 40 hours per week. A Foster Grandparent shall not serve more than 2088 hours per year. Within these limitations, a sponsor may set service policies consistent with local needs.	A Foster Grandparent shall serve a minimum of 260 hours annually, or a minimum of 5 hours per week. A Foster Grandparent may serve a maximum of 2080 hours annually, or a maximum of 40 hours per week. Within these limitations, a sponsor may set service policies consistent with local needs.

What Is the Purpose of These Changes?

CNCS received many years of feedback from the Senior Corps grantee community about the challenges associated with previous service hour requirements (a minimum of 15 hours per week and a maximum of 40 hours per week). A key challenge revealed in the feedback is that the requirement adversely impacted volunteer recruitment. Many grantees expressed concern during the Senior Corps focus groups that the requirement of 15 hours per week limited their ability to engage a new generation of older adults in service as

many would-be volunteers were unable to commit to the required minimum number of hours for varying reasons. Additionally, another related challenge voiced in the feedback is that the requirement restricted a grantee's ability to offer a diversity of volunteer services, which consequently impeded the grantees from offering a wider range of volunteer opportunities.

CNCS anticipates that by reducing the minimum requirement to five hours weekly, or 260 hours annually, it will help alleviate the challenges the Senior Corps grantees expressed during our focus groups. We believe that the new regulation will allow for increased flexibility in service schedules for volunteers, which is particularly important for reduced time summer education programs, and will likely result in strengthened increased recruitment of new volunteers and retention of existing volunteers. Additionally, we believe the new minimum hour requirement will increase opportunities for project innovation.

Things to Consider for Implementation

- Within these limitation of the requirement, a grantee will still be able to set service policies that define service schedules consistent with local needs.
- SCP and FGP grantees can engage additional and diverse volunteer stations that may have been inaccessible to them with the previous 15 hour minimum requirement, so additional outreach for new community partners is a consideration.
- A Volunteer Service Year (VSY) remains equal to 1,044 hours of service of a FGP or SCP volunteer within a 12-month period, which is equivalent to \$2,767 per year.
- The maximum federal cost per VSY remains at \$6,000, which means that for every \$6,000 in federal funding received a sponsor must program at least one VSY.
- When preparing your budget, consider this requirement in conjunction with the other regulation changes of the reduction in ongoing in-service training hours (45 CFR 2551.23 (f) and 45 CFR 2552.23 (f) and the elimination of the direct benefit ratio (80/20 rule) (45 CFR 2551.92 (e) and 45 CFR 2552.92 (e) as the required minimum training hours were reduced (and could be used for service hours) and there is now more flexibility in budgeting without the requirement to follow the former 80/20 rule.
- Match requirements and performance measurement requirements are unaffected by this change.

Conclusion

Overall, this regulation change allows SCP and FGP grantees to have more flexibility and local control over assessing the local needs of both prospective volunteers and the volunteer stations at which they serve. As SCP and FGP grantees implement any reduction in service hour requirements, it will be important to continue to manage the day-to-day implementation of service schedules of volunteers, and account for any variations in planned schedules, so as not to underachieve VSYs. There is additional flexibility added for grantees with the elimination of the Direct Benefit Ratio and the reduction in requiring in-service training hours, so it will be important for grantees to review and to alter their budgets as needed if implementing a reduction in service hours. If you have any questions about this updated requirement, please reach out to your CNCS Program Officer or email SCFinalRule@cns.gov.